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ÆSOP'S FABLES

EDWARD DEL

McLOUGHLIN BROTHERS NEW YORK

OLD FABLES IN A NEW DRESS.

THE FOX AND THE STORK.

IN ancient Greece, as fables tell,
A Stork and Fox did neighbors dwell.
They were good friends, as friendship goes;
Although upon each other's toes
They often trod, yet I must say,
'Twas always in a friendly way,
One day, the Fox in language fine,
Invited Mistress Stork to dine.
Upon the grass, beneath the shade,
An overhanging Ilex made;
In delicate, and rich array,
The dinner hot, and smoking lay.
Then Master Fox, the cunning elf,
Bade Mistress Stork, "to help herself."
The Fox was hungry, and the Stork,
Could play a lively knife and fork;
But *now*, to her intense dismay,
Could not exactly see the way;
For *soup*, in *shallow* dishes there,
Composed alone the bill of fare!
And Mistress Stork with slender bill,
Had much ado, her beak to fill;
Could hardly get a single drop,
To ease her hungry, empty crop;—
While Master Fox, snuffed up the breeze,
And lapped the toothsome soup with ease.
Then with a sigh of deep content,
A look on Mistress Stork he bent;
Lay back upon the grass beneath,
And sweetly smiling, picked his teeth.
Now Mistress Stork was cunning too;
And did not make a great to-do,
But smiling at the Fox's prank,
Arose, the wicked rogue to thank.

She said with look, and voice serene,
And all the grandeur of a Queen;
"Dear Master Fox, politeness true,
I'm sure, is only found in you;
Thanks for your courtesy so rare,
And for your rich, and dainty fare.
To-morrow, will my birthday be,
And you must come, and dine with me.
To me, indeed, you're like a brother,
And one good turn deserves another."
Then pluming with a stately grace,
Her snowy feathers,—left the place.
The morrow came, a lovely day;
And Master Fox, in grand array;
Attired in many a gorgeous hue,
With jacket red, and trousers blue;
And dainty tread, and full of talk,
Arrived to dine, with Mistress Stork.
She led him to a sculptured stone,
Part of a temple overthrown;
The fragment of an ancient shrine,
Where Gods of old, were wont to dine.
And soon, a modest Rabbit maid,
Upon the stone, the dinner laid.
But what has come to Reynard now,
And why that cloud upon his brow?
With haggard eyes—upon the stone,
He sees—all lovely—but *alone*!
With slender neck of wondrous grace,
A noble, pure Etruscan vase!
Then bending low her graceful head,
Sweet Mistress Stork, to Reynard said:
"Dear friend sit by, and eat I pray
Your appetite seems poor to-day."



THE FOX AND THE STORK.

(CONTINUED.)

“I’m sure, that what you eat with *me*;
With you can never disagree.
I know, ’tis modesty alone,
That makes you gnaw that nasty bone;”
(A bone, the wretched Fox had found,
Picked clean, and bare, upon the ground.)
“Come now, be sociable and gay,
And *eat* as you did *yesterday*.”
This said—she dipped her slender bill,
Deep in the vase, and ate her fill;
One eye on Master Fox the while,
Who watched her with a hungry smile;
And licked the crumbs of meat that fell,
Where Mistress Stork had dined so well.
And now the Fox, with smile and bow,
And stomach void, and humble brow;
Got up to take his leave at last,
And go where he could break his fast.
“Dear friend,” said he, “I own with shame,
That I have sadly been to blame;
The silly joke, I thought to play,
You have repaid me well to-day.
All empty home, I justly go,
And how it feels, you’ve made me know.
When *next*, you dine with me, you’ll find,
The dinner strictly to your mind.
For every one, is like to mend,
Who gets as good, as he does send;
And jokers, cannot well complain,
If jokes are played on them again.”
So saying—Reynard, faint and pale,
Went sadly off with drooping tail;
And never more, whate’er his talk,
Attempted tricks, with Mistress Stork!

NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, who all day long,
Had cheered the village with his song;
Nor yet at eve, his note suspended,
Nor yet, when eventide was ended;
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite.
When looking eagerly around,
He spied far off upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark;
And knew the Glow-worm by his spark.
So stooping down from Hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The Worm, aware of his intent,
Then spoke to him, right eloquent;—
“Did you admire my lamp,” said he,
“As much as I, your minstrelsy;
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I, to spoil your song;
It was the self-same Power divine,
Made you to sing, and me to shine,
That you with music—I with light—
Might beautify, and cheer the night.
The songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation;
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.
From this short story, you may see,
How pleasant ’tis when friends agree;
That brother, should not war with brother,
Nor worry, and oppress each other;
But joined in unity, and peace,
Their happiness, with Love increase.
Pleased, when each others’ faults they hide
And grieved, if either yield to pride.

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

A Fox, one lovely Autumn day,
With thoughts of dinner in his mind;
Went prowling forth, to look for prey,
And much to grapes, he felt inclined—
And soon, upon a trellis wide,
A rich, and fruitful vine, espied.

It grew upon a lofty wall,
O'er which the purple clusters hung;
And after many a grievous fall,
As upward to the fruit he sprung;
He paused awhile, with lolling tongue;
While high above, the bunches swung.

When suddenly, among the leaves,
Appears a mastiff, fierce and grim;
Who soon espies the thieving Fox,
And points a blunderbuss at him.
(The Farmer-dog, who owned the vine,
And meant to press the grapes for wine.)

"Get out," he cried, "you thieving rogue,
Or you shall have a taste of lead!"
Then Reynard sprang behind a tree,
And carefully concealed his head;
And as the mastiff, left the wall,
In sneering tones, aloud did call;

"Your wretched grapes, are green and sour,
And only fit for stupid hogs;
Henceforth, I'll carefully avoid,
All selfish, greedy, farmer-dogs."
So saying, Reynard left the place,
With ears erect, but hungry face.

THE FROG AND THE RAT.

ONCE on a time, a foolish Frog,
Sick of the marsh, her native home;
Vain, proud, and stupid as a log,
Made up her mind, that she would roam;
And fix her habitation, where,
She'd breathe, at least, a purer air.

Away then, leaps the silly Frog,
Bent on a change, of any kind;
"It can't be worse, than where I was,"
She said, "to travel, I've a mind."
A Rat, who saw her haste away,
Cried "Stop! you'll surely go astray!"

"Ne'er fear, I leave that filthy hole.
True talent now, will surely thrive;
No longer, like the blinded Mole,
Will I be buried thus alive.
But, pray, (for I'm extremely dry),
Know you of any water nigh?"

"None," said the Rat, "you'll reach to-day,
Believe a friend, and take my word,
So slowly, do you make your way;
This act of yours is quite absurd.
Go to your native bog again,
And in your marshy home remain."

"No!" on the journey, she was bent,
Although so weak, she scarce could hop;
Her thirst increased, as on she went,
But nowhere, could she find a drop
Too late, she moaned, her folly past,
And soon she sunk, and breathed her last.



THE HOG AND THE ACORNS.

ONE moonshiny night,
With great appetite;
A Hog feasted on Acorns,
With all his might.

Well pleased with his prize,
Both in shape, and size;
While he ate, he devoured,
The rest with his eyes.

Said the Oak, looking big,
"I should think, Mister Pig;
You might thank me, for sending
You, fruit from my twig."

"But, you ill-behaved Hog,
You eat up all the prog;
And have no better manners,
It seems, than a dog."

Said the Hog, looking up,
Though not ceasing to sup;
Till the acorns were eaten,
Aye, every cup.

"I acknowledge, to you
My thanks would be due;
If from feelings of kindness,
My supper you threw."

"But I know that you drop,
Every year the same crop;
And that mighty Dame *Nature*,
Forbids you to stop!"

THE ASS AND THE SHEEP.

"How hard is my fate,
What sorrows await;"
Said the Ass, to the Sheep,
"My deplorable state!"

"Last night in a shed,
Cold, naked, ill-fed;
The snow, wind, and rain,
Came in on my head."

"While Master—he sat,
By the fire with the Cat;
And they both look, as you do,
Contented, and fat."

"How can you pretend,"
Said her innocent friend;
"To complain?—let me, silence—
To you recommend."

"My sorrows are deep,"
Continued the Sheep;
With her eyes flowing over,
And ready to weep.

"I expect—tis no fable,
To be—from the stable;
To-morrow, dragged out,
And cut up for the table!"

"Don't, envy me, pray,
For I'm sure that some day;
You'll be hitched up to drag me,
To Market away."

THE OX AND THE FROGS.

A COLONY of croaking Frogs,
Who lived within a shaking bog;
Were much annoyed by cattle's feet,
Which stamped about their snug retreat;
And sometimes killed, a frog or two,—
They didn't like it, nor would *you*.
And so, one day with solemn state,
They held a croaking, high debate;
And after many pros, and cons,
A way, at last, they fixed upon.
Up spoke a grave, and ancient Frog,
Who sate upon a mouldy log—
“If this affair, you'll trust to me,
A better state of things you'll see;—
I know the mighty Ox who owns,
The pond which joins our marshy homes;
With your consent, to him I'll go,
And your proceedings let him know.”
So said—so done,—and swelling high,
With danger in his goggle eye;
With breeches red, and coat of green;
(For he had in the army been)
And visage stern, and bearing high,
And clanging sabre on his thigh;
He knocked at Farmer Ox's door,
And soon his highness stood before.
The Ox sat in his easy chair,
His pot and pipe, beside him there;
An aged mastiff, by his side,
With spees, upon his nose astride.
Then said the Ox, with accents slow;
“Dear Master Frog, I fain would know,—
To what I owe, this honor rare;
And why, you strut, so proudly there?”

Then with a swell, which at its worst,
Seemed like, his leather belt to burst;
The Frog made answer, “Sir, I'm here,
For *what*, will very soon appear;
Your cattle, sir—I grieve to say,
A vicious lot—come every day,
And in the pond, they splash and swim,
Without regard for life or limb.
Now, Farmer Ox, I say to you,
This state of things, will never do;
So near our marsh, they must not roam,
And you must keep your cows at home.
If not—some other mode we'll find
To fix this matter to our *mind*!”
This said—the Frog with visage wise,
Swelled out to an enormous size;
Then clanked his sword, as if to say,
“*I* know for one—a speedy way.”
Then Farmer Ox, with humor grim,
And burning eye, replied to him;
“Great Sir,” your eloquence so fine,
I would not dare to match with mine;
Your modest message shall not wait,
This honest dog shall answer straight.”
Then, at a wink—the growling dog,
Flew fiercely at the luckless Frog;
And seizing him, with savage roar,
All lifeless, dashed him to the floor!
Then, to the marsh they quickly speed,
And slaughter all the croaking breed!
Who learned the bitter truth at length,
That *weakness*, must not threaten *strength*;
And civil words will often gain,
A point, that rudeness seeks in vain





THE CITY AND COUNTRY RAT.

A CITY Rat of great renown,
Of pretty wit, and manners fine ;
When "all the world" was out of town,
Went—with a country friend to dine.
A very polished Rat was he,
Of taste correct, as you shall see.

The country Rat was very proud,
To see his cousin from the Town ;
He welcomed him, in accents loud,
And brought his best provisions down.
Plied him with bacon, bread, and cheese,
And tried his very best to please.

The dinner done—our city friend,
Whose dainty soul was sorely tried ;
With many a bow, and courteous smile,
Declared himself quite satisfied.
A crumb or two, brushed from his face,
And picked his teeth, with easy grace.

Then, to his rustie host he said,—
"Excuse me, sir, but I must say,
That in this wretched country place ;
Your talents rare are thrown away.
I pray you, then, come home with me,
And how we live in town, you'll see."

It was enough—so off they set,
And by the time that night came down ;
All travel-stained, and hungry, they,
Were glad enough to see the town.
And then, with soft and stealthy feet,
Ran swiftly through the silent streets.

They reached a large and handsome house,
And creeping through the grand saloon ;
All breathless, found themselves at last,
Snug, in a well set dining room.
The guests were gone, no servants there—
But stores of rich, and dainty fare.

Then with a grave, and courtly grace,
The well-bred Rat began to dine ;
And helped his hungry, rustie friend,
To fish and fowl, and rarest wine.
"Drink deep," he said, "and banish fear,
No Cat or Dog, can reach us here!"

"This is the way we always live,
With ev'ry comfort, free from pain ;
I hardly think you'll wish to go,
And try your country life again."
Just then with growls, and fearful din,
A savage dog, came bounding in!

He sprang upon the table straight,
And broke some precious china-ware ;
But he was just, a thought too late,
And didn't catch the pretty pair!
They heard the monster's warning cry,
And found a hole of refuge nigh.

Then, said the panting country Rat,
As soon as he, his breath could gain ;
"I've seen enough of city life,
I'll seek my country home again.
Sweet peace of mind, awaits me there,
More wholesome than the richest fare."

THE FOX AND THE MASK.

A Fox, walked round a Toy-man's shop,
(How he came there, pray do not ask)
But soon he made a sudden stop,
To look, and wonder at a Mask,—
A thing he ne'er had seen before,
And so he marveled, more, and more.

The Mask was beautiful, and fair,
A perfect Mask, as e'er was made ;
Such as a lovely Lady wears,
At party, ball, or masquerade.
A dainty toy, with silken strings,
And shining gay, with golden rings.

He turned it round, with much surprise,
To find it prove so light and thin ;
"How strange," he cried, with puzzled eyes,
"Here's mouth, and nose, and eyes, and chin ;
Yet not a single thing behind,
The perfect features, can I find."

"How lovely, are the cheeks, and lips,
And yet, there something still remains,
To make it perfect—what a shame—
So fine a head, should lack for brains !"
Then, with a look of lofty scorn,
Turned on his heel—and straight was gone.

Thus to some boy, or maiden fair,
Who neither sense, nor knowledge gains ;
We say with pain, "Ah, what a shame
So fine a head, should lack for brains."
Dear children, learn this moral true,
Lest you should all be dunces too.

THE MAN AND HIS COAT.

A MAN beat his coat,
Now and then, with a cane ;—
And astonished, one morning,
He heard it complain.

"How badly, I'm treated !
My fortune, how hard !
To beat me, dear master ;
Is this my reward ?"

"I beat you !" he answered,
"The charge is unjust ,
I but gently endeavor,
To take out the dust."

"The means I make use of,
To you may seem hard ;
But it does not diminish,
For you, my regard."

"My boy, whom I dote on,
More fondly than you ;
I beat *him*, now and then,
For the same reason too."

Though this fable is good,
Yet I never will blush ;
To say, *I* prefer dusting,
My coat with a brush.

And to most of my readers,
I need not explain ;
That *advice*, is the brush,
I prefer to the *cane*.



THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

AN honest Bull, devoid of harm,
Once lived upon a pleasant farm.
He had a gentle, Cow for wife,
And led a peaceful, happy life.
One, little one, had blest the two,
As sweet a calf as ever grew.
And so they lived, in honest pride,
Beloved by all the country side.
An open-handed pair, were they,
And never turned the poor away.
No beggar passed the open door,
Without addition to his store.
One day, a dog of visage grim,
With stumpy tail, and twisted limbs;
All spent with thirst, and hunger sore,
Stopped panting, at the cottage-door.
The good old Cow, by pity led,
Gave him a bowl of milk and bread;
Then bade him to the barn repair,
And rest his wearied body there.
He seeks the barn, without delay,
And in a manger, filled with hay;
All fresh, and scented to his mind,
A sweet repose, he hopes to find.
Into the place, with eager leap,
He springs, and finds—a calf asleep!—
Curled up, and breathing low, he lay,
Concealed among the fragrant hay.
And now, I mean to tell you, how—
This wicked dog, repaid the Cow.
With cudgel raised, and growling low,
He gave the calf a cruel blow!
“Get out,” he cried, “’twere best for you,
There isn’t room enough for two.”

The calf, amazed, with noisy tongue,
Out of the manger quickly sprung;
With bleeding face, and bruises sore,
Fell, groaning loudly to the floor!
The Cow, with not a thought of harm,
Just then, was milking near the barn;
She heard the groans, and filled with fear,
Could scarce believe, her startled ears;
Rushed to the barn, and near the door,
Beheld her calf upon the floor!
The dog watched from the manger nigh,
With ready stick, and blazing eye.
She raised her calf, and soothed his pain,
And set him on his legs again;
Then led him tenderly away,
And to the snarling dog, did say:—
“Are these the thanks, you wicked scamp.
I get, when I relieve a tramp?
My husband, sir, will teach you soon,
To sing another kind of tune;
I hear him in the yard outside,
No doubt, he’ll treat you to a ride.”
Just then was heard a mighty roar,
And Father Bull looked in the door!
The wretched dog, with whine forlorn,
Tried hard to dodge, the horrid horns;
But all in vain, the raging Bull—
With boiling wrath, and vengeance full;
Straight, drove him from his stolen lair,
And tossed him, yelling in the air!
Then, when he fell to Earth again,
Trod out, at once, his life and pain.
And thus you see, the lesson rude,
That came to base ingratitude!

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

WITHIN the Garden's peaceful scene,
Appeared two lovely foes ;
Each wished to be the reigning Queen,
The Lily, and the Rose.

The Rose, soon reddened into rage,
And swelling with disdain ;
Appealed to many a poet's song,
To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height, bespoke command,
A fair imperial flower ;
She seemed designed, by Flora's hand,
To deck her fairest bower.

And pointing to her graceful form,
She waved in envy vain ;
The snowy petals of her crown,
To show *her* right to reign.

The Goddess Flora, chanced to hear,
This fierce, and high debate ;
And flew to part the rival Queens,
Ere yet, it was too late.

"*You* shine," she said, unto the Rose,
"With rich, and lovely sheen ;
While *you*"—unto the Lily fair,
"Surpass, in stately mien."

"Until some flower, of richer hue,
Or rarer form be seen ;
That shall, in glory dim you both,
Let *each*, be called a Queen."

THE BOY AND THE WASP.

AMONG a garden's lovely flowers,
A bright and active child ;
Enjoyed the brilliant Summer hours,
And played with rapture wild.

And now, he sees a gilded Wasp,
Whose brilliant hues decoy ;
(As round, and round, he buzzing flies,)
The unsuspecting Boy.

He tries to catch the shining prize,
All eager for the chase ;
With active wing, the cunning Wasp,
Still darts from place to place.

Till tired at last, the Insect sought,
To gain some slight repose ;
And soon he settled motionless,
Upon a blooming Rose.

And now the Boy, with cautious steps,
That not a sound disclose ;
Quick seizes, with an ardent grasp,
The Insect and the Rose.

The Wasp, amazed at this assault,
With rage began to sing ;
And straight into the Infant's hand,
He plunged the poisoned sting !

The Boy, now dropped the angry Wasp,
And shrieking loud with pain ;
Ran frightened home, and never chased,
A gilded Wasp again !



THE SICK LION.

A LION, who for many a day,
Had caught, and gorged himself with prey;
At last, was laid up with the gout,
So ill, he could not venture out;
Nor stir about, without a crutch,
Which didn't help his temper much.
The Fox, who heard this bad report,
With prudence, seldom came to court.
He didn't care to trust his skin,
Too much, the Palace gates within!
And this, is what he heard one day,
The Wolf, unto the Monarch say:—
“Your Majesty, I grieve to find,
The Fox, to treason seems inclined;
Whene'er I meet him, through the day
All silently he slinks away.
No more, your Highness, sees him here,
He's hatching mischief, Sire, I fear.”
Then, said the Lion, with a groan,
“They'd leave me here to die alone;
But now, I'll stop this kind of thing,
And let them know that *I* am King.
Go straightway, bring the Fox to me,
And what he's at—we soon shall see.”
Off went the Wolf, with wicked joy,
To think upon some safe decoy;
While Master Fox, to save his skin,
With many bows, came smiling in.
Then bent his knee, with easy grace,
While watching close the Lion's face.
The Monarch shook his mighty mane,
And with a growl, of rage and pain;
Said, “Sir, I've noticed that of late,
You do not in our presence wait!

“Now, Sir, explain yourself, I pray,
We'll hear what you have got to say.”
The Fox, then bowing low, replied—
“Great King, I've traveled far and wide,
Since last I stood within this place,
And gazed upon that august face.
Magicians, many, have I seen,
And much among the doctors been.
To bring your Highness back to health,
(The task to which I set myself;)
I've vowed beneath no roof to dwell,
Until I see your Highness well.”
Just then, the Wolf with staring eyes,
Came in, and saw; with great surprise:
The Fox, who talked with courtly ease,
And seemed the Lion much to please.
“And so,” resumed the Fox, I bring,
A *cure* unto my lord, the King!
Which must be tried without delay,
For so the wisest doctors say.
A Wolf-skin, fresh to keep you warm
Must from a Wolf, be reeking torn!
And here is one, now near at hand,
Who will not for a trifle stand;
I'm sure he'll do so small a thing,
As give his *hide*, to cure his King.”
The wretched Wolf, found out too late,
The tender mercies of the great.
The Lion, with a mighty roar,
Soon pinned him helpless to the floor;
With eager haste, tore off his skin,
And soon was snugly wrapped within!
But Master Fox, ran off amain,
And never came to court again.

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